

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium

Smarter Balanced Weekly Update

Issue 82

Week ending Friday, September 14, 2012

Top News This Week

- Executive Committee election opens Monday, 9/17
- Mathematics webinar recording available
- Proficiency-Based Learning Task Force update and upcoming webinar

The Smarter Balanced Weekly Update is an email sent each Friday to keep Consortium members and collaborators informed of new developments and upcoming events. The Update is widely distributed to Consortium state leads, work group members, Consortium and WestEd staff, and Consortium advisors, partners and service providers. State members should feel free to share information in the Update with those who are interested in the Consortium's work.

Please note that embedded links in the Update sometimes direct readers to the Consortium's internal website, available only to Consortium members. If you are a state employee in a Consortium state and need access to material on this website, please contact sbac@wested.org.

From the Executive Director

Greetings. This week we held our second Smarter Balanced Collaboration Conference in St. Louis. The conference allowed work groups and service providers to kick off major projects like test delivery, test administration, and reporting. In addition, the conference provided dedicated time for K-12 state leads and higher education leads to discuss our progress and the work ahead.

Chief state school officers met on Wednesday in a public session and considered several issues related to design and implementation. Consistent with our state-led governance model, each Governing State had one vote, and states reached consensus on the following issues:

- Governing States approved the process for developing preliminary achievement level descriptors (ALDs), the text statements that articulate levels of progress toward mastery of the Common Core and provide clear explanations of performance for parents, educators, and policymakers. Draft ALDs will be available for public feedback during a four-month comment period later this year. Preliminary ALDs are expected to be finalized by March 2013.
- Governing States voted to move forward to create an organizational plan in partnership with the Council of Chief State Schools Officers (CCSSO), subject to the acquisition of funding. The goal of this project is to provide a road map for Smarter Balanced after grant funding from the Race to the Top Assessment Program ends in September 2014.
- Chief state school officers approved a sampling plan for the Pilot Test in early 2013. The Pilot Test will include more than 10,000 items and performance tasks currently under development and will provide information about how these items and tasks perform in a real-world setting. Participation in the Pilot Test will be open to all schools in the Consortium. To ensure that all student populations are represented, results from a statistical sample of approximately two million students will be analyzed. The Chiefs and their representatives approved a plan to sample an equal percentage of students from all Governing States.

More information is available in an article from THE Journal at <http://thejournal.com/articles/2012/09/13/sbac-governing-states-advance-development-of-common-core-assessment-system.aspx>.

I want to thank all of the participants who joined us for the conference this week, including state education Chiefs, K-12 state leads, higher education leads, work group members, and contractors. Special recognition goes to the team at Washington's Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for coordinating all of the logistical details that made the success of this event possible.

When we first met in July 2011 in Denver to approve the Summative Assessment Master Work Plan, Smarter Balanced had no active contracts related to the assessment system. Today, we have 11 active and two completed contracts.

As our work has grown, so, too, has our commitment to providing additional opportunities for face-to-face collaboration and discussion. Smarter Balanced will host collaboration conferences twice a year, and I am already looking forward to our next meeting in March 2013 in Washington, DC. JW

Announcements

Executive Committee election opens 9/17—The nominating period for the Executive Committee member election is now closed. On Monday, September 17, Governing State leads will receive an email from sbac@wested.org with instructions on how to cast their votes for the positions that will run through September 30, 2014. The new members will fill positions currently held by Joseph Martineau (co-chair), Dan Hupp (at-large member), and Deb Sigman (at-large member), all with terms starting October 1, 2012, and ending September 30, 2014. All votes must be received by 11:59 p.m. local time Monday, September 24. Biographies of the candidates can be found on the Collaboration Site at <https://sites.google.com/a/smarterbalanced.org/home/home/ec-election>.

Mathematics webinar recording available—On September 7, Student Achievement Partners' Jason Zimba and Smarter Balanced Director of Mathematics Shelbi Cole presented an informational webinar about the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (CCSSM) to the Consortium. The webinar provided a deeper understanding of the standards with a focus on Smarter Balanced and its development of assessments aligned to the CCSSM, and provided an overview of the CCSSM's implications for assessment, including criteria for evaluating CCSS-aligned items and tasks. The webinar recording is available at the following link: <https://sites.google.com/a/smarterbalanced.org/home/webinars/smarterbalancedccssformathematicswebinar>.

Proficiency-Based Learning Task Force Update—The Proficiency-Based Learning Task Force will hold its next webinar on Thursday, September 20, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Pacific. This is the task force's last currently scheduled webinar. In the webinar, the task force will share a final report that outlines the ideas of the group, possible solutions, and areas that may need further investigation by Smarter Balanced and/or others. For more information on joining the webinar or the work of the task force, please contact the group facilitator, David Ruff, at druff@greatschoolspartnership.org.

American Institute for Research (AIR) selected for test delivery system contract—The test delivery system encompasses test registration, presentation of the assessment items to students, and delivery of the data from the test to reporting systems. Under this contract, AIR, in collaboration with Data Recognition Corporation (DRC), will modify its existing test delivery system to meet Smarter Balanced specifications for the Pilot Test of the assessment system in early 2013 and for the Field Test in early 2014. The system will be optimized for release in its open-source version in fall 2014. Additional information is available at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/news/smarter-balanced-awards-test-delivery-system-contract-to-american-institutes-for-research/>.

Consortium update webinar now available—A recently recorded webinar with Joe Willhoft provides an overview of the Consortium's work and upcoming milestones. The 30-minute presentation covers progress on test design and development; special populations; technology infrastructure; procurement; and collaboration and partnerships. The webinar can be shared through YouTube and viewed on the Smarter Balanced website at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/resources-events/webinars/>.

Resources

Contacting Smarter Balanced—The Smarter Balanced external website (www.smarterbalanced.org) showcases the innovative work of the Consortium and provides frequent updates on activities, milestones, and events. Visitors can submit questions or reach Smarter Balanced staff at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/contact-us/>. Consortium members may contact sbac@wested.org for

information on upcoming meetings and events.

Collaboration Site—Consortium members: The Consortium uses an internal collaboration site hosted by Google Apps to enable information sharing and collaboration among the member states. If you are a state employee in a Consortium state and need access to material on this website, please contact sbac@wested.org.

Follow Smarter Balanced on Twitter—Follow @SmarterBalanced for resources and links to the latest news about the Consortium.

Relevant news items—State members: Weekly selections of news items relevant to the Consortium are available on the internal Smarter Balanced website at <https://sites.google.com/a/smarterbalanced.org/home/communications/news-archive>.

Prior versions of the Weekly Update—State members: Previous Smarter Balanced Weekly Updates are available on the internal Smarter Balanced website at <https://sites.google.com/a/smarterbalanced.org/home/communications/weekly-update-archive>.

Smarter Balanced meeting minutes—State members: Agendas and minutes from previously held meetings are available on the internal Smarter Balanced website at <https://sites.google.com/a/smarterbalanced.org/home/meetings>.

Answering Open Questions

Each week we will address a question or two on the minds of Consortium members. Send your questions to sbac@wested.org.

Will there be a standards-based report card for students, schools, and districts?

Smarter Balanced is developing a secure, online reporting system that will provide assessment results to students, parents, teachers, and administrators. The reports—differentiated by audience—will show student achievement and progress toward college and career readiness as measured by the claims in English language arts/literacy and mathematics, which are aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Information about the claims is available in the Smarter Balanced ELA/Literacy and Mathematics Content Specifications: <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/smarter-balanced-assessments/>.

Reports will likely provide more detailed information at the classroom and school level. For example, on the writing claim, it may be difficult to report sub-scores within writing—such as organization or style—at the student level, but it may be possible to do so across a larger number of students at classroom or school level.

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